

Duckworth, John W. Hickenlooper, Amy Klobuchar, Jack Reed, Jeanne Shaheen, Brian Schatz, Benjamin L. Cardin, Edward J. Markey, Alex Padilla, Margaret Wood Hassan, Catherine Cortez Masto.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 12.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Matthew L. Garcia, of New Mexico, to be United States District Judge for the District of New Mexico.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 12, Matthew L. Garcia, of New Mexico, to be United States District Judge for the District of New Mexico.

Richard J. Durbin, Sheldon Whitehouse, Martin Heinrich, Tim Kaine, Tammy Baldwin, Ben Ray Lujan, Tammy Duckworth, John W. Hickenlooper, Amy Klobuchar, Jack Reed, Jeanne Shaheen, Brian Schatz, Edward J. Markey, Benjamin L. Cardin, Alex Padilla, Margaret Wood Hassan, Catherine Cortez Masto.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 15.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Adrienne C. Nelson, of Oregon, to be United States District Judge for the District of Oregon.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 15, Adrienne C. Nelson, of Oregon, to be United States District Judge for the District of Oregon.

Richard J. Durbin, Sheldon Whitehouse, Martin Heinrich, Tim Kaine, Tammy Baldwin, Ben Ray Lujan, Tammy Duckworth, John W. Hickenlooper, Amy Klobuchar, Jack Reed, Jeanne Shaheen, Brian Schatz, Edward J. Markey, Benjamin L. Cardin, Alex Padilla, Margaret Wood Hassan, Catherine Cortez Masto.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, finally, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum calls for the cloture motions filed today, February 9, be waived.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. WARNOCK. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the scheduled vote occur immediately.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CLOTURE MOTION

Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 5, Cindy K. Chung, of Pennsylvania, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Third Circuit.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Debbie Stabenow, Margaret Wood Hassan, Brian Schatz, Tina Smith, Elizabeth Warren, Tim Kaine, Ron Wyden, Patty Murray, Chris Van Hollen, Martin Heinrich, Jack Reed, Christopher A. Coons, Alex Padilla, Christopher Murphy, Sheldon Whitehouse, Richard Blumenthal.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination

of Cindy K. Chung, of Pennsylvania, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Third Circuit, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN) and the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) are necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 52, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 8 Ex.]

YEAS—52

Baldwin	Heinrich	Reed
Bennet	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Blumenthal	Hirono	Sanders
Booker	Kaine	Schatz
Brown	Kelly	Shaheen
Cantwell	King	Sinema
Cardin	Klobuchar	Smith
Carper	Lujan	Stabenow
Casey	Manchin	Tester
Collins	Markey	Van Hollen
Coons	Menendez	Warner
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Warnock
Duckworth	Murkowski	Warren
Durbin	Murphy	Welch
Feinstein	Murray	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Wyden
Graham	Padilla	
Hassan	Peters	

NAYS—46

Barrasso	Grassley	Risch
Blackburn	Hagerty	Romney
Boozman	Hawley	Rounds
Braun	Hoeven	Rubio
Britt	Hyde-Smith	Schmitt
Budd	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Capito	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Lankford	Sullivan
Cornyn	Lee	Thune
Cotton	Lummis	Tillis
Cramer	Marshall	Tuberville
Crapo	McConnell	Vance
Cruz	Moran	Wicker
Daines	Mullin	Young
Ernst	Paul	
Fischer	Ricketts	

NOT VOTING—2

Fetterman Schumer

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCHATZ). On this vote, the yeas are 52, the nays are 46.

The motion is agreed to.

The Senator from Rhode Island.

REMEMBERING CHIEF VINCENT VESPIA, JR.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise today with my colleague Senator WHITEHOUSE to pay tribute to a legendary police officer, Vincent Vespia, Jr., whose distinguished career in Rhode Island law enforcement spanned 57 years, from a young State trooper, to a top organized crime investigator, to chief of police.

Vin passed away suddenly on January 24, 2023, at the age of 84, and we wanted to take a moment to honor this great hero—a police officer who was so beloved and respected by all, who practiced and taught the art of community policing, and who truly made a positive difference in the lives of countless Rhode Islanders.

Vin was a dear friend, and I will always remember with great fondness the time we spent together, especially when he came down to Washington

with his fellow chiefs of police. I deeply admired the chief, not just as a police officer but as a person with wisdom like no other.

In 2012, Chief Vespia, who was still actively serving as South Kingstown's police chief, was honored as the first-ever inductee into the Rhode Island Criminal Justice Hall of Fame.

At that time, he was well known for fearlessly pursuing investigations into organized crime and corruption and had already served 30 years as the chief of the South Kingstown Police Department. And he continued in that role for another 4 years.

Vin's courage and integrity made him, quite deservedly, one of the most respected and revered members of the State's not only law enforcement community but of the State overall.

As Stephen Pare, the former commissioner for public safety for the city of Providence put it, Vespia was "relentless and honest, and as strong as you can be as a police officer." He described him as a "no-nonsense chief" who was comfortable talking with anyone on the force. "He commanded respect because he gave respect," Pare said.

And that is an apt description and high praise, indeed, but well deserved.

Vincent Vespia grew up on Federal Hill and then the East Side of Providence. He served in the Army for 2 years and worked at the then "new" Bostitch factory in East Greenwich before finding his true calling in law enforcement.

Beginning as a motorcycle trooper in 1959, he served in the elite Rhode Island State Police for two decades before becoming chief of police of South Kingstown.

During his 21 years with the Rhode Island State Police Intelligence Unit, he focused on combating organized crime. Throughout the 1960s and seventies, Vin Vespia helped coordinate State and local efforts to successfully track, disrupt, and dismantle organized crime.

Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Mike Stanton chronicled some of those stories noting that, in his words:

Vespia grew up playing in the street with some of the wise guys he would later pursue as a cop.

Stanton tells the story of how, as a young trooper, Vespia arrested a former playmate from his old neighborhood with a truckload of stolen furs. Recognizing his childhood friend, the perpetrator asked Vespia:

How can you arrest me? We played kick the can together.

Vespia replied:

You went one way, I went another.

Indeed, he took the high road in everything he did.

In one of his most notable cases, Vin Vespia worked for years to gain the trust of a known hit man in order to collect evidence leading to the arrest and prosecution of notorious organized crime leader Raymond Patriarca, the head of organized crime in New England.

In addition to being an outstanding police officer, Vin Vespia was an incredible mentor. He taught generations of law enforcement officers the finer points of police work and leadership.

Toward the end of his career, a local television station asked the chief about his legacy, and he replied:

Forget about what I've done, what my rank was, where I've worked, and the cases I've made . . . forget about all that . . . if somebody would remember me as . . . a guy who tried to be a good cop, [then] I'm happy.

Mr. President, Vin Vespia was not only a guy who tried to be a good cop, he was a great cop.

And when he finally hung up holster and badge, the Providence Journal proclaimed:

Hail to the chief: Vincent Vespia, Jr., "most admired law enforcement officer" in R.I., retires after 35 years as town's top cop.

Along with Senator WHITEHOUSE, I want to express our condolences and gratitude to Chief Vespia's beloved wife and partner Judy. A police officer's family makes sacrifices so that their loved one may serve, and that is certainly true for Vin's beloved family.

And I want to recognize his children, including Renee Caouette and her husband Ron, Robin Vespia, and the late Rhonda Vespia.

Chief Vespia was also a doting and devoted grandfather to his grandchildren: Dylan, Tyler, Dante, and the late Chad O'Brien.

And I also salute his dear brothers, Jay and the late Robert Vespia.

And now, I yield to someone who worked closely with Chief Vespia in a variety of capacities—as the attorney general of the State of Rhode Island, as a Federal attorney for the District of Rhode Island, as one of the most successful, effective attorneys and Federal officers, as well as State officers, in the history of our State—my colleague Senator WHITEHOUSE.

With that, I yield to Senator WHITEHOUSE.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I am delighted to join my senior Senator to honor our common friend, Vincent Vespia, who was lately the chief of the South Kingstown, RI, police department.

He passed away on January 24, 2023, surrounded by his wife Judith-Ann and their cherished daughters Robin and Renee.

As Jack said, Vinnie Vespia grew up in Providence, and he served 2 years in the Army before returning home to Rhode Island and a career of service in the Rhode Island State Police.

Chief Vespia was a legend in our outstanding Rhode Island law enforcement community—famously fearless in his pursuit of justice.

During his 22-year career in the State police, Chief Vespia was at the center of the State's ongoing fight against organized crime, back in that day when the mob was a force in Rhode Island and the Rhode Island State Police was its counterforce.

His courageous police work led to the downfall of some of the State's most violent mobsters, including crime boss Raymond Patriarca and the notorious Gerald and Harold Tillinghast.

Along with his grit and toughness, Chief Vespia had style. In the book that Jack referenced, "The Prince of Providence," Mike Stanton wrote that:

One night Vespia came crashing through the second-floor window of Willie Marfeo's crap game on Federal Hill from the bucket of a cherry picker, waving a machine gun at two dozen stunned dice players.

Not everybody does that.

After his successful career with the State Police, Chief Vespia went on to take the helm of the South Kingstown Police Department, where he spent the next three and a half decades.

Chief Vespia was the longest serving leader of that department and will be fondly remembered for his pursuit of justice, for his unimpeachable sense of right and wrong, for his persistent good humor, and, of course, for the love and respect of that community that he leaves behind.

Hearing Vinnie Vespia tell stories of his law enforcement career with a twinkle in his eye is an indelible memory for me, and he was a mentor to me, as well as to the young officers who he brought up in law enforcement.

When Chief Vespia retired in 2016, it was widely accepted that he was one of the greatest to ever have worn our uniform.

I thank him and his family for supporting him in his devoted service. I, like many, will miss him dearly. Rhode Island was lucky to have this man, and we are safer because of him and many officers he mentored and trained who carry on the Vincent Vespia legacy to this day.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

WILLOW PROJECT

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I was in Utqiagvik, AK, also known as Barrow, AK. It is the northernmost community in the United States. I was there for what some describe as a Messenger Feast. The Inupiat word is "Kivgiq." And it really was a reunion, a glorious family reunion, where the communities of the North Slope region, all eight communities and actually neighbors from Canada, gather together during the winter to celebrate family, to celebrate community. It is an extraordinary sharing.

It is very similar to the sharing that they have during the summer months, when the communities come together to celebrate the whale harvest, the Nalukataq, yet another extraordinary family-type reunion but one of a sharing in a region that is built on a culture of sharing—sharing of subsistence foods, sharing of resources—and that is what I want to focus my comments on today, the resources within the North Slope region.

As I was preparing to leave Utqiagvik on Sunday morning to go back to Anchorage, I was at the hotel and visiting

with people who were gathered there for coffee. And as one gentleman was leaving, he said: Lisa, I think there are just two things that we need you to do. We need you to make sure that you protect our whale quotas so we can continue to provide for the sustenance of the people in this region, and we need for you to ensure that Willow is opened up for oil production so that we can continue our lifestyle.

Some might suggest that there is some inconsistency between this culture of a traditional subsistence lifestyle and the harvest of a whale to feed entire communities and the production of oil in the Arctic region. And I would suggest that it is not only absolutely not inconsistent but absolutely compatible because it is with the sharing of these resources that the people of the North are able to have much of what we enjoy in other parts of America today: the opportunity to see our kids educated, the opportunity for healthcare, the opportunity to be safe in our communities, the opportunity to have economies.

So I am here today to speak in strongest possible terms of the Willow Master Development Project within the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska. We just refer to it as the NPR-A. And what I hope to do, along with my colleague Senator SULLIVAN, is to further educate Members of the Senate and really people around the country about this project by explaining how it will help to benefit the nearly 11,000 Alaskan Native people and residents who call the North Slope home, how it will support good-paying union jobs, how it will reduce our energy imports from, quite honestly, some of the worst regimes in the world, and why its approval is both necessary and prudent.

And I want to start with a little bit of background just to put Willow in context. Our NPR-A is a Federal petroleum reserve. It is a Federal petroleum reserve. Its lands were explicitly designated back in 1923—so 100 years ago—designated under the Harding administration. It is an area that encompasses 23.4 million acres. It is roughly the size of Indiana up in the northwest corner of Alaska.

It is home to the Alaska Native communities of Wainwright, Utqiagvik, Atkasuk, and Nuiqsut. These people from these communities have been living in this region since time immemorial. They still practice a traditional lifestyle, but they live in this region, and they care what happens in their region.

I mention that the NPR-A is 100 years old this year. Yet it has only seen a few projects, and those have been in the very recent years. And, in part, ironically, that is because the Obama-Biden administration pushed for the oil companies to turn their focus there. They explicitly encouraged—they said: Go develop in the NPR-A—explicitly designated for oil and resource development. They said: Don't go in the offshore, don't go in the

nonwilderness part of ANWR. Go over to NPR-A.

That is exactly what ConocoPhillips decided to do. The company first acquired its leases for the Willow Project back in 1999. This was during the Clinton administration. They started developing them shortly thereafter, but they really accelerated that work during the Obama-Biden administration and then moved into Federal permitting in 2018. So they have been seeking Federal approval for 5 years now.

Then, last Monday, the Department of the Interior published its final supplemental environmental impact statement, the SEIS, for the Willow Project in order to address two issues that had been identified by the Federal court. So now where we are is, roughly, 30 days from now, in this time period, the Department of the Interior will be able to issue a final Record of Decision announcing its decision on whether and how this critical project should be allowed to proceed.

So you have got this final SEIS. This is a document that has been worked with career BLM officials. These are scientists. These are engineers. They have decades of experience evaluating environmental impacts of proposed projects. And they, together, with all of this analysis over this 5-year project, selected a new preferred alternative for the Willow Project. They call it Alternative E.

But keep in mind that these scientists, these engineers, these career Agency officials took years of analysis and very rigorous review. They had significant—significant—input and support—support—from the Alaska Native communities within the NPR-A and the North Slope Borough. So in other words, the people who live up there, the people whose home region it is, gave that input. There was back-and-forth. There was give-and-take. They listened to the Native people, and they worked to develop this Alternative E. Now, keep in mind, the Willow Project was already quite small when it was first advanced, in line with all modern development on the North Slope. But what BLM's preferred alternative—what Alternative E does is it reduces its footprint even further. So from what ConocoPhillips originally wanted to do to now this Alternative E is they have gone from five drill pads to now three, with a fourth deferred to later permitting. The project will have 19 percent fewer road miles, cover 11 percent fewer acres, avoid further—avoid ecologically important areas. These were all considerations that were taken into place and placed into this Alternative E.

So at this point, the total project will cover just over 400 acres. So I have already shared with you the size of the NPR-A. What we are talking about here with the Willow Project is that .002 percent of the NPR-A will be impacted. It will be in full compliance with all of the restrictions that are included in the land management plan

that the Obama-Biden administration issued back in 2013. So under that plan, they effectively took 50 percent—50 percent—of the NPR-A's surface area, some 11.8 million acres, they took that off the table to resource development. That is already off. We are not talking about that. We are talking about the area that is available now for development. The Willow Project is just .002 percent of the NPR-A.

The Willow Project itself is not going to cover all of its leased land, not by a long shot. There are areas that will have no development—no development will take place. There will be areas where development is only allowed with a waiver that would be required and areas where additional considerations will apply before any development takes place.

So, again, think about this. You have got 11.8 million acres of the NPR-A that has been taken off the table. This project is 429 acres. What we are trying to develop here, the project we are talking about developing, is literally 27,500 times smaller than what has already been taken off the table. I impress this upon folks because I think it is important to recognize that this is an extraordinarily significant project for the State of Alaska—for the resources that it will bring to my State, the economic development that it will spur. It is significant to the people of the North Slope Borough who call this region home and who rely on the revenue and the resources.

But as significant as it is, the footprint for Willow is miniscule. It has been meticulously planned to coexist with the wildlife, with the tundra, with the subsistence lifestyle on the North Slope.

Think about it. You would not have the two whaling captains who were wandering the halls here just this week—two whaling captains from the North Slope who are advocating for development of Willow if they felt that this was going to be harmful to their subsistence activity or to the subsistence caribou hunter who was also being interviewed by reporters and meeting Members of the Senate here just Tuesday to talk about why he believes that this coexistence with development, as proposed in the Willow Project, can proceed and is compatible with their life and their lifestyle.

ConocoPhillips, in moving forward with this, will have to abide by hundreds of lease stipulations and best practices. And best practices, keep in mind, when you are exploring and developing in the State of Alaska in the North Slope, it is not like Louisiana; it is not like New Mexico. They are operating in an Arctic environment, which means you have to work within the contours of the area around you. So best practices mean that exploration is effectively limited to about 90 days—90 days out of 365. You have got a lot more time that you can be building. We have to use ice ropes to help facilitate the exploration rigs that might go out.

You cannot be on the tundra when the tundra is not sufficiently frozen, but then that also means that you have got to get off the tundra as soon as the spring comes.

So these conditions, this scenario, is so different than anywhere else that we produce in the United States of America. Even with these lease stipulations, even with all that has to go on, Conoco believes that they can make this extraordinary environmental commitment. They believe that this project, this Alternative E, is viable for them to proceed.

You know, if you are following the news about Willow, you would probably get the sense that the support from most Alaskans is not there because there are a few voices whom we see in objection. I get that, but I will tell you that one of the reasons—probably the biggest reason—that has helped the Willow project garner support throughout the State is that the people of the North Slope who live there have come forward and have said: We believe that this will be helpful to us.

It is not just those who are living on the North Slope. The broader Alaska Federation of Natives has come together in support; bipartisan, non-partisan entities from around the State. One of the leaders in the region, the North Slope Borough mayor—and I had dinner with him and his wife on Saturday night. Mayor Brower is not only the mayor—a pretty extraordinary man—but he is also a whaling captain himself and is strongly, strongly in support of the Willow project.

In a letter to Secretary Haaland, he wrote:

Responsible oil and gas development is essential to the economic survival of the Borough and its residents. Oil and gas activities are the primary economic generator for our region, and . . . by far the most significant source of funding for the Borough's community services and infrastructure.

To put that into context, when he says "significant source of funding," over 95 percent of the Borough's revenues come from oil in the region.

So when we think about our communities and our counties and where they may gain sources of revenue, it is pretty, pretty extraordinary to find any area where 95 percent of your revenues come from one single source.

And what do these revenues provide? They enable the Borough to provide for basic, basic services and basic infrastructure like clean drinking water, like education, like healthcare, like emergency services. The Borough does it all. The Borough is funding their own government, their own government to include search and rescue. I just mentioned emergency services.

I mentioned that the NPR-A is the size of Indiana but that the North Slope Borough is pretty significant in its size and scope, with eight communities spread out over hundreds and hundreds of miles—no roads. In the wintertime, the way that you move around is by snow machine, and in the

summer, it might be by boat. But the reality is that the weather is very, very harsh, and snow machiners get lost. As people are trying to travel from one village to the next, who is there on a search and rescue? It is the local community, funded by the North Slope Borough. These are activities that, I think, most don't think that a borough would be providing, but they are able to do so—they are able to care for their people—because of the revenues that they receive from oil.

As one former mayor put it: Oil and gas activities are responsible for 200 years of development on the North Slope in the span of 30 years.

I was on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee when he made that statement on the record.

It is extraordinary how the quality of life has advanced since the days of revenue coming from our oil, and a recent study really kind of brings it home. It is not just about infrastructure that brings clean water or heat to your home, but it is what happens to one's health and well-being. When you have improved infrastructure, when you have sanitation systems, when you have medical care that these revenues have helped to facilitate, people are healthier, and people live longer.

There is an increased life expectancy among Alaska Natives who live on the North Slope. Get this: If you were born in 1985, your life expectancy is about aged 65—pretty young. For those born in 2014, the average life expectancy is 77 years. Think about that. Think about the dramatic leap in life expectancy. The only thing that has changed—because they still live a subsistence lifestyle; they are still living in a really harsh environment. The only thing that has changed is that they have access to resources that allow them to be better cared for, that allow them to have a quality of life that we would just accept as basic. I think clean running water is basic. I think a flushed toilet is basic. I can't tell you how many communities in my State I go to where they are waiting for the day—waiting for the day—that they will get running water and a flushed toilet—pretty basic.

I think this is important. I have been talking a lot about the benefits to the people of the North Slope region, but when I mentioned that the Kivgiq and the Nalukataq are celebrations of sharing—the sharing of gifts at Kivgiq, the sharing of the whale at Nalukataq—it is not just the subsistence lifestyle that our Native people share. It is in the structure of how ANCSA really came to be such an amazing benefit to the Alaska Native people. ANCSA is the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. There is a provision within ANCSA, section 7(i) that requires—and this was agreed to by the 12 regional Native corporations—that 70 percent of all revenues received by each regional corporation from timber and subsurface estates be divided annually according to the number of Natives who are enrolled in that region.

What I am sharing with you is that, of the resource wealth that comes from the North Slope, the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation is not the only Native corporation and beneficiaries to that. All Native shareholders throughout the State, through the 12 regional corporations, are entitled to that sharing of those benefits.

Think about what that means. If you are from a region where you don't have the resources, think about what that means to then have sharing coming to you from the north. When adjusted for inflation, between 1982 and 2015, a total of \$3.1 billion was shared between the regional corporations for the benefit of their shareholders, and 56 percent of that, or \$1.794 billion, came from oil and gas operations.

So when people ask what is the benefit that you receive from the oil sector in Alaska, it is certainly jobs. Absolutely. It certainly benefits our State, absolutely, in terms of our revenue, and you have all heard of our permanent fund dividend. But the immediate benefit—the real, tangible benefit—that is shared with the Alaska Native people is an extraordinary model. I think those of us here in the lower 48 think that corporations are all sharp elbows, you know, wanting to get as much as they possibly can for themselves. That is not who the Alaska Native people are. The value that they bring is truly one of sharing.

The North Slope is an amazing place, whether it is summer or whether it is the heart of winter, as it was just this weekend at 30 below. I know the Sun was up for a brief moment in time there for a period of time. Everyone is very excited that the Sun is coming back. You know, it is dark, and it is cold. But for those who would suggest that responsible resource development and a subsistence way of life are incompatible, I invite you to go up to Utqiagvik. Go to these communities and hear for yourselves and see for yourselves how it is just simply wrong, because you will be able to see the benefits of responsible resource extraction and what it can mean to the lives of people in their communities.

I was in Utqiagvik again this past weekend, but I was there in the first week of January for a memorial service for a friend of mine and a great, great Native leader, Oliver Leavitt. Oliver was not only the head of ASRC. As an extraordinary corporate leader, he helped, really, with the formation of the North Slope Borough, and he was a whaling captain. He spent a lot of time here in Washington, DC, trying to educate people.

He would always get grumpy with me when I would say: Oliver, I am so happy you are back.

He would say: I should be at hunting camp. The caribou are coming through.

You know, he was a man who lived in two worlds, but you listened. I listened. I share this. I went to the school of Oliver Leavitt, and I heard his stories about how hard it was for him as a

young boy and as a young man. His job was to go out before school and collect driftwood so that their family home could have some form of fuel.

Keep in mind that there are no trees on the North Slope. It is hard. It is hard.

He said: I went to school not because I wanted to learn but because there was heat in the school.

He saw a transformation of what it meant for the people when they were finally able to get natural gas into his community and how, now, an elder can turn on the heat by just turning on the thermostat. What a concept. Well, for us, we kind of expect that, but it is just a reminder, again, of the benefits that come to those who live there and who have lived there for generations and thousands of years—of how they are compatible with Alaska's future here.

The Willow project will allow development, health outcomes, and life expectancy all to improve—all to improve—on the North Slope.

You think about the resources that the people need and what will happen if they no longer have access to those resources. What will happen? They are telling me, LISA, we can't go back in time. We don't want to be left out in the cold. We will not be left out in the cold.

This is not social justice. So I ask us, as we are looking at this particular project, to keep in mind and keep in your hearts the people for whom it will most benefit.

But don't forget, the rest of Alaska and the country as a whole—they are also going to benefit. It is projected to create an estimated 2,500 construction jobs. Seventy-five percent of them will be filled by union labor, so unions are pretty supportive of this. Once complete, it will support 300 permanent jobs, which then in turn spins off thousands more across the State and across the country.

I mentioned the unions. If you support unions, you should be supporting Willow. The Alaska AFL-CIO, the Alaska District Council of Laborers, the North America's Building Trades Union, the Labors' International Union of North America, the International Union of Operating Engineers, the United Association—plumbers and pipefitters—they are all on board. They are all on board and strongly supportive. So are countless others who recognize the importance of creating good jobs in Alaska and around the country to help reverse our GDP decline.

We are in a tough place in Alaska right now. I think we are No. 47, if I am not mistaken, out of 50 States. We are seeing a net migration out of Alaska. That is greatly concerning—greatly concerning. We have a higher than average unemployment rate. So we are looking at this and saying that Alaska needs this project.

I know there is criticism out there. You have folks who are saying: Nope, can't move Willow forward. We all have

to address climate. We have to address the issue of climate change.

Let's talk about that for just a second because you know, Mr. President—you have heard me talk about it. You have heard me stand up and say that we need to be actively working to reduce emissions and increase our use of clean energy. I have been pushing policies to do just that. But I think we also recognize that you just can't flip a switch. You just can't get there from here overnight. There is a transition.

So I think what we need to focus on, the true choice that we have to face, is how painful, how chaotic do we want the transition to be for the people whom we serve?

On Tuesday night, when the President spoke at the State of the Union, he acknowledged it. He said we are going to need oil for at least another decade and beyond that. I would argue it is going to be longer than a decade, regardless of what we do at the policy level.

So the question is, What are we going to do to take care of our own needs with our own resources or are we going to empower OPEC at our own expense, and are we willingly going to return to the days of being highly dependent on foreign oil, with all of the economic, all of the environmental, all of the geostrategic consequences that entails?

We have seen what happens when we make poor choices and we don't plan for what a rational energy transition is going to look like. Europe is certainly one example there. But I would suggest—let's bring it a little closer to home. California is another example. Alaska's oil production has declined. We send a lot of our stuff to California. As our oil production has declined, what is happening in California is that their imports have risen and they have risen dramatically. They have turned where? They have turned to countries like Saudi Arabia and Russia for their supply. So now that the Russian supply is outlawed, we saw a recent New York Times article that noted that "one in every nine tanks of gas, diesel, or jet fuel pumped in California comes from the Amazon." So, really, are we OK with this? Are we really OK with this? I don't think California is going to be happy knowing their gas came from Russia. But now that we are not taking it from Russia, now it is going to come from the Amazon rather than from a petroleum reserve in Alaska.

The choice here is not whether we need to continue to develop our oil resources—we do; we clearly do—the choice is where the source is going to come from. We are going to need it for decades to come. I will tell you, I am going to choose Alaska anytime over foreign sources. I will choose Alaska because we have a better environmental track record, because development there benefits our people there, and it ultimately makes it a little easier to address climate.

So you can oppose production on the North Slope. You can impoverish Alas-

ka Natives and blame them for changes in the climate that they did not cause. But can you really feel good about that given the autocrats you are going to empower around the world and the harm and the devastation that come?

We have a better answer, and the better answer here is Willow. It is going to provide up to 180,000 barrels per day at peak production. This is going to help us refill our Trans-Alaska Pipeline. It is going to keep the lower 48 from having to import from some of the worst regimes in the world. So instead of importing from places with no environmental standards to speak of, we should be confident that the energy we need is coming from a project with a tiny footprint that is safely operated with as little impact as humanly possible. And we can ensure that the benefits of production go to the Alaska Natives of the North Slope and the communities around the State and around the country rather than petrocrats like Vladimir Putin.

All we need—all we need—is the approval of the Willow project, which will allow us to continue to tackle climate change while maintaining our energy security. It is not going to be a violation of the President's pledges, which were—I will remind you, they were to allow responsible development on existing leases to occur. Well, Willow—valid existing leases—was approved when he came into office. Its re-approval next month would simply signal to Alaska Natives, to Alaskans, to Americans, and the world that we are serious not only about our climate policies but also our energy policies.

I urge the Biden administration in the strongest possible terms to listen to all who support this important project, and I urge them to reject the false and misguided claims about impacts coming from some. I would urge them to issue a Record of Decision early next month selecting Alternative E without new limits or extraneous conditions. We need to get to work.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOKER). The Senator from Mississippi.

TAIWAN

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, seven centuries ago, a Chinese novelist wrote:

The Empire long divided must unite; long united, must divide. Thus, it has ever been.

These are the opening words from the Chinese classic novel "Romance of the Three Kingdoms." Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, and Xi Jinping have drawn inspirations and quoted passages from this classic because the enduring prominence in the Chinese imagination can be traced back for centuries. They describe the long rhythm of Chinese history—a period of civil war and chaos followed by a period of stability. Now, after a century of perceived humiliation, the Chinese Communist Party believes it is destined to be whole and powerful again.

That is what makes China's current ambition to "unify," as they put it,

even more troubling. Just as Vladimir Putin seeks to use violence to reconstitute what he considers the old Soviet empire, the Chinese Communist Party has made it its mission to “reunite” all those it considers Chinese, including those who have gained freedom and liberty, like the people of Taiwan. The Taiwanese people want no part of Beijing’s communist vision, and they fully reject the idea that Beijing should impose its will on its neighbors.

Some may think Beijing has been hiding and biding its time, but, in fact, it has for decades been active and aggressive in expanding its claims of sovereignty and territory. In the last 60 years, China almost risked a nuclear conflict with the Soviet Union, fought a war with Vietnam, and engaged in multiple bloody skirmishes with India as recently as last month to assert their territorial claim. Today, it continues to make egregious territorial claims in the South and East China Sea, all in the name of expanding the reach of the Chinese Communist Party.

Americans saw firsthand President Xi’s disregard for our own sovereignty over the past week, as a Chinese spy balloon violated U.S. airspace uncontested for several days—just the latest in Beijing’s string of provocative actions.

To see his plans for Taiwan, look no further than Xi Jinping’s brutal repression of the people of Hong Kong. He continues to trample the freedoms they long enjoyed and indeed were promised by the Chinese Communist Party. We should have known that the idea of “one country, two systems” was always incompatible with the rule of the Chinese Communist Party.

Taiwan is the missing piece in President Xi’s puzzle. Without Taiwan, Xi Jinping, who wants to be remembered as one of the great emperors of Chinese history, will have failed. And make no mistake, he cannot accept a free Taiwan because Taiwan, situated 90 miles off the Chinese coast, is living proof that freedom and democracy can thrive in a Chinese-speaking nation. Taiwan is a powerful advertisement for liberty to the 1.4 billion people who suffer under the communist police state. For this reason more than any other, Xi Jinping wants what he views as the “Taiwan problem” resolved on his terms.

He and his comrades have spent the last several decades pursuing the fastest military buildup in history, achieving the world’s largest navy by sheer number of vessels and by far the largest fleet of advanced ballistic missiles. The Chinese Air Force now flies fifth-generation aircraft armed with air-to-air missiles that outrange our own. The entire People’s Liberation Army conducts advanced and realistic training. Our own top cyber officer, GEN Paul Nakasone, says the improvement in Chinese cyber capabilities is “unlike anything [he has] ever seen.”

All of the PLA’s capabilities are aimed across the Taiwan Strait. Just

last week, someone leaked a private memo from Gen. Mike Minihan, our air mobility chief, in which he urged troops to be ready for war in 2025. This is 2023; he urged that they be ready for war in 2025.

Despite all the hand-wringing, this is just the latest example of senior civilian and military officials who are increasingly worried about Chinese aggression over the next 4 years, during Xi Jinping’s third term. Even Secretary of State Blinken last year said Beijing remains determined “to pursue unification on a much faster timeline” than previously expected.

There should be no doubt that the potential for Chinese invasion of Taiwan is higher today than it has ever been. This raises the fair question of whether protecting Taiwan is feasible. Can the small island nation of 23 million souls really stand a chance against a nation of 1.4 billion? The answer is that Taiwan not only can stand a chance, it must be able to defend itself successfully because what is at stake in Taiwan is not just its own freedom and sovereignty but the stability of the region, the stability of the world economy and our own American economy and national security.

Standing tall against a powerful aggressor is no small task. We have seen this in Ukraine. Over the past year, we have seen the sacrifices of courageous Ukrainians who have taken the fight directly to the Russians and continually won despite many dismissing that possibility, including our own intelligence community. That very same heroic kind of resistance and the very same help from friends and allies will be required for Taiwan to preserve its freedom and democracy.

The conflict in Ukraine is closely related to what will happen in Taiwan. Indeed, China openly supports the brutal Russian invasion. This reflects Xi Jinping’s own ambition to launch a similar assault on Taiwan. He knows full well that if Putin can outlast the free world and get away with it, with murder and war crimes in Ukraine, his own chances of success against Taiwan will be stronger. U.S. support for a win in Ukraine enhances our ability to deter Beijing in Taiwan.

Congress has led the Biden administration to help Ukraine in its fight against Russia. Now, Congress should lead once again to help Taiwan defend itself against communist China. In fact, for decades, Congress has led the effort to preserve a free and democratic Taiwan. But to do this work on the timeline and scale required, we need first to understand the extraordinary ways in which Taiwan contributes to American interests.

I recently stood here and made the case for why Americans should care about supporting Ukraine. Today, I will pose a similar question: Why should Americans care about Taiwan?

Well, they should. We should.

First, failure to defend Taiwan would forever damage our position in the

Indo-Pacific, calling into question our credibility and capability to defend other allies and partners, such as Australia, Japan, the Philippines, South Korea, and Thailand.

Since the end of World War II, our allies have relied on the United States of America, underpinning more than seven decades of peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific. America has also benefited greatly from this peace and prosperity. Today, Japan is our fifth largest trading partner, and South Korea is our sixth largest trading partner. A failure to defend Taiwan would upend that stability, and our allies and partners could abandon America if that happens.

Simply put, peace in the Pacific means jobs for Americans. War in the Pacific, on the other hand, would put American economic freedom at risk.

In addition, what happens in Taiwan will have consequences for whether our allies decide to pursue new capabilities they have thus far forsaken. With open access to the Pacific Ocean, Beijing would almost certainly push Tokyo, Seoul, and others to seek to acquire nuclear weapons or perhaps even to rebalance from the United States to China. What this development would mean for the U.S. alliance network and stability in the Indo-Pacific is unthinkable.

Our allies and partners also play a pivotal role in providing key military basing in the Western Pacific. With U.S. bases in Japan, South Korea, and now the Philippines, our national defense in the Pacific is strong. Without those, our national defense would start on the shores of Guam or Hawaii, rendering America much harder to defend, rendering our homeland much harder to defend.

These allies want us in their countries. We are there because they have allowed us and asked us to be in their countries, and they have each spent billions of their own dollars to build military facilities for our forces. America’s web of alliances and partnerships is critical to our success in competing with China in the long run.

With 60 percent of the world’s population, the Indo-Pacific is projected to be the largest contributor to global economic growth over the next 30 years. If we lose these critical partners, we would also cede a critical advantage in our effort to compete economically with China, a nation with five times our population and an economy nearly our size.

So that is the first reason.

The second reason: Taiwan is a linchpin of the global economy. A war over Taiwan, launched by China, would immediately send the global economy into a depression the likes of which we have not seen in a century. Americans would lose access to key semiconductors that are in our laptops, phones, cars, and countless electronic products that have become the backbone of daily life.

As our colleague Senator DAN SULLIVAN of Alaska said in a strong December speech on Taiwan, the semiconductor shortage in 2021 already cost Americans \$240 billion and nearly 8 million cars—8 million cars that we don't have because of this shortage. Taiwan also exports a significant amount of advanced machine tools that underpin manufacturing jobs here in America.

Chinese aggression against Taiwan would send shock waves through the economy and upend daily life here in America. It would dwarf the economic effects of Russia's war in Ukraine, and we need to do whatever we can to prevent this aggression.

Thirdly, Chinese control of Taiwan's semiconductor industry would leave American supply chains extremely vulnerable to the influence of the Chinese Communist Party. Beijing wants to seize that lucrative industry in order to gain a clear upper hand in the world economy. This could cause massive economic pain for the United States. If Beijing gains control of Taiwan's semiconductor industry, it could rewrite the rules of the global economy. Beijing wants to dictate the terms of any negotiations with the United States, costing Americans tens of millions of jobs and stalling our economic growth.

To sum this all up, protecting Taiwan as a free and prosperous democratic nation is absolutely vital to the prosperity and security of our children and grandchildren. Taiwan should matter to every American.

Now, how do we ensure that a war over Taiwan never occurs—because that should be our goal—given what we know about Beijing's intentions and capabilities?

We should be vigilant about applying the lessons we have learned in Ukraine. That requires recognizing the differences between Ukraine and Taiwan.

The U.S. military began training Ukraine 8 years ago, following the Russian invasion of Crimea and eastern Ukraine in 2014, but we have done comparatively little to train the Taiwanese. With Taiwan, we are playing catchup. We arm Ukraine through multiple land routes by rail and vehicles. In wartime, quickly arming Taiwan by air and sea would prove extremely challenging. Also, the People's Liberation Army in China is not the Russian military. They are much more focused and serious.

So there is simply no time to waste, Mr. President. We need to get high-quality weapons into Taiwanese hands now, before the conflict breaks out. As Senator Phil Gramm and I wrote last year in the Wall Street Journal, we need to turn Taiwan into a porcupine so that Xi Jinping wakes up every day and concludes that an invasion is not worth the cost.

Well, why do you say a porcupine? Any wolf has the ability to kill a gentle porcupine. Yet such an attack rarely occurs in nature. The defense of the porcupine's quills, which can rip

through the predator's mouth and throat, is the deterrent that protects it from attack by the wolves. That should be our approach for Taiwan's defense.

Last year, to begin work on this issue, Congress passed the Taiwan Enhanced Resilience Act. Congress provided the Biden administration with the ability to send \$1 billion worth of U.S. weapons stocks to Taiwan. We also authorized up to \$10 billion in foreign military financing with matching contribution by Taiwan. This brought to fruition years of work by our colleagues Senator MENENDEZ and Senator RUSCH.

We authorized the creation of a joint stockpile, accelerated foreign military sales reform, expanded U.S. military training, and established the first-ever comprehensive oversight regime on U.S. national security work with Taiwan.

Let's not forget, our friends the Taiwanese are accelerating their own defense for the sixth straight year, with a 14-percent increase in 2022. Their weapons purchases increasingly align with how our military experts envision a correct defense of the island, including with Harpoon anti-ship cruise missiles, Stinger anti-aircraft missiles, and secure communications systems. We should encourage this change in Taiwan's focus.

As Gen. James Mattis once said, we need a willing partner in the Biden administration to move at "the speed of relevance"—"at the speed of relevance." Last September, the Armed Services and Foreign Relations Committees asked the administration some very basic questions: Which weapons are most important in the Pacific? What training does Taiwan need? What weapons is Taiwan ready to buy?

The Biden administration has yet to respond to these questions, even though we know the State Department and Defense Department have completed the analysis. In this case, silence will only make the situation worse. We need answers.

I reiterate: Congress needs this information to perform our constitutional duties effectively. So I am calling on the Biden administration today to work with us to accelerate the transfer, financing, and sale of a key set of military capabilities to Taiwan. The President needs to use the authority that Congress provided to transfer \$1 billion in weapons to accelerate the expansion of our training programs in Taiwan. Make no mistake, the President's actions will have direct consequences for Taiwan's ability to defend itself and for our ability to prevent a war in the Pacific.

Without these tools, China will continue to gain the upper hand in the Taiwan Strait. We need to offset and deter the Chinese military from taking actions in the first place. An influx of American weapons will go a long way toward assuring that we stand with them against Chinese aggression and encourage other nations to join us.

As Ronald Reagan said, "peace does not exist of its own will. It depends on us, on our courage to build it and guard it and pass it on to future generations"—end of quote from Ronald Reagan, one of the great advocates of peace through strength. That is how we will help Taiwan preserve its freedom and democracy and how we can avoid war in the Pacific.

At the same time, the Armed Services Committee will intensify its focus on our own work, ensuring our military has every tool it needs to deter and, if necessary, defeat the People's Liberation Army. We must fix our munitions production problem and focus on the high-end weapons that our troops need. We need to modernize and expand the Air Force and the Navy while honing the Army and Marine Corps for their missions in the Western Pacific.

We also have to explore new ideas for nuclear modernization to respond to the unprecedented Chinese nuclear buildup, given that our commanders now tell us the Chinese have more ground-based launchers for nuclear weapons than we do. And we must continue our work to improve the quality of life for all of our servicemembers and their families so they can focus on the tasks at hand.

In conclusion, Mr. President, Congress has prioritized financial and material support for Ukraine to help turn the tide in that war. The security of Taiwan is no less important than the security of Ukraine. The threat to global and economic security from communist China has the potential to jeopardize the prosperity and safety of Americans here in the United States. It is time for our actions to reflect the significance of that threat.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I want to thank my good friend from the great State of Mississippi, who has been a fantastic leader on the Armed Services Committee, a fantastic leader on so many of these important national security topics. He and I share a very strong, similar, identical view on the importance of Taiwan, and we all need to be doing that. So I want to thank my good friend Senator WICKER from Mississippi for his leadership on this and so many other issues.

WILLOW PROJECT

Mr. President, I also want to thank my good friend from Alaska, Senator MURKOWSKI, who was just on the floor of the U.S. Senate talking about the importance of the Willow Project not just to Alaska but to America. She and I are going to be down here on the floor a lot in the next several weeks. I was here last week talking about this project.

Now, for those of you who haven't watched, a quick recap of the Willow Project: a very large-scale oil and gas project in the National Petroleum Reserve of Alaska, so not a controversial area at all. It is not like ANWR or some of the other areas in our State.

NPRA, as we call it in Alaska, was set aside by the Federal Government decades ago for oil and gas development because we need oil and gas. We need it. Some people out there don't think we do, but we do. And if we need it, we should do it in America.

Just a quick, little summary of some of the key aspects of this: 2,500 jobs to build this. It is ready to build tomorrow. We have permission. It is completely shovel-ready. Seventy-five percent of those jobs will be union jobs, building trades jobs. It is one of the top priorities of unions. I will talk about that. Peak production: Almost 200,000 barrels a day—highest environmental standards in the world, by far; lowest greenhouse gas emissions of a major energy project in the world, by far; billions in revenues from the Federal Government, from State government, for local governments in Alaska, and broad-base support from every group in Alaska you can imagine.

So that is the Willow Project. We got the final EIS last week. And the Biden administration is still kind of saying: Maybe we are going to narrow this so much that we are going to kill it.

I am going to talk about that. That would be unbelievable. I have tried to work with this administration and, certainly, Senator MURKOWSKI has. We have made this the No. 1 issue from the Alaska delegation ever since Joe Biden stepped into office on day one.

I personally raised this with the President, every Cabinet official. Willow is No. 1. If you want cooperation from the Alaska delegation, you have to work with us. We are there. We are almost there. But I want to talk about some of what happened last week because our good friends in the media, who love to write about this story, Willow, because they hate the project, they are biased in the project. So when the EIS came out last week, if you read the national media—which there was a lot of—guess who they quote. Guess who they quote. Do you think they quote the Alaskans who want it? The Native people? The indigenous people in my State who really want it? The unions? No. No, no, no. Our friends in the national media never quote them. They quote Greenpeace, Center for Biological Diversity. Who are the other radical groups? Earthjustice. All the far left radical groups—none of whom live in Alaska, by the way—they get fully quoted: Climate Bomb—all this crazy stuff. It is not scientific-based at all. But they don't quote people, in my view, who really, really matter—who really, really matter; particularly the Native people.

You want to talk about racial justice; you want to talk about environmental justice; you want to talk about racial equity—buzz words the Biden administration uses all the time. The media does too. But somehow they always leave out the indigenous people of my State.

It is wrong. It is wrong. Media is wrong. The Biden administration is

wrong. I am going to go into this in a big way. But I just want to make one final point. When people talk about the science—the Democrats, we are the party of science—what happened last week was the final EIS came out, and that was the career staff at the Federal Agencies who came out with this final environmental impact statement. It wasn't great. It limited this project from five pads, which is where the Trump administration—their record of decision—concluded based on science that you can do this in an environmentally sensitive way. The Biden administration came out and said: No, we are going to move it to three pads. All right. That is the career staff. We can live with that.

The private sector company, ConocoPhillips, can live with that. The Native people can live with that. We have 30 days. If you are an American who cares about energy security, national security, weigh in with BLM.gov, the Department of the Interior. Say: We have got to get the Willow Project going.

If this gets limited beyond that, it is pure politics—pure politics. The Democrats, party of science—OK, prove it. If this gets limited more, it will kill the project. We know every far-left environmental group in the country—just read the paper—last week, they said, we are out to kill this thing. If this gets killed, it will be pure politics by Joe Biden, John Podesta—the whole group in the White House.

So the Native people are very upset in my State because overwhelmingly they support this. Every major Native Alaskan group in the country supports this. And they can't get one quote in the newspaper. The Washington Post—forget it. They won't quote a Native Alaskan who supports it. They find the one who is against it and quote her. But the vast majority support it. This is the voice of the Arctic Inupiat. They put this statement out a couple of weeks ago. I am just going to read it again.

“Outside activists groups”—that is the ones that always get quoted in the newspaper. You know the ones: Center for Biological Diversity, Greenpeace, Earthjustice. By the way, Center for American Progress—interesting about them—they are really against it.

Now, why is that so interesting? That was started by John Podesta. Until recently, he was the leader of it. They put statements out against Willow all the time. Now, he is in charge of making a decision on whether Willow should go forward. Is that fair? Boy, I hope he is being objective. Imagine if the shoe was on the other foot. I wouldn't even want to describe what that would look like.

So all these groups, they are always against it. But here are the Native people who want it. I will explain for a minute why they want it. So they said:

Outside activist groups opposing Willow have drowned out—

Certainly in the media—

[o]ur local perspectives and are actively working to supersede the views of the Alaska Native people.

True. By the way, the media—sorry, guys, but you are helping them in a great way to cancel the voices of the Native people.

This is not environmental justice or any other kind of justice.

It certainly is not racial equity. It is racial cancelization. I am continuing.

It is a direct attack on Alaska Native self-determination.

So that is going on right now. And it is very frustrating. It is very frustrating because the voices of some amazing people in my State—the indigenous people of Alaska—are being canceled and drowned out. And our national media has no problem quoting in every story the far-left radical enviros who want to shut down every energy project in America, and they won't quote these great people.

So why do they care about this project so much? Well, it is jobs. It is energy. It is revenues. But you know what? It is even bigger than that. Here is why they care.

I break out this chart a lot. I am going to explain it here. This is a chart from the American Medical Association. And what it does, it looks at the changes and life expectancy in America from 1980 to 2014, a 25-year period. Now, look, we are all Americans. We want progress. Where you see anywhere kind of yellow and then green and then blue and then dark blue and purple, that is good in our country. That means people's life expectancy is increasing. We all want that. We all want that.

Now, unfortunately, you see like orange and red—a couple of spots in America, orange, red—that is actually American life expectancies in the last 25 years decreasing. Nobody wants that.

This is another topic, but that is primarily parts of the country that were hit really hard by the opioid epidemic. We have to work together and improve it. We don't want to see any orange or red here. Nobody wants an American's life expectancy to decrease. That is bad.

But here is my broader commitment. What part of America had the biggest life expectancy increase from 1980 to 2014? Increase. My State—the great State of Alaska. If you look at this map, life expectancy—particularly in the rural areas, the Native areas, Native villages, Aleutian Islands chain, parts of the southeast—life expectancy went up 5, 6, 7—up to 13 years—13 years. The highest in the country. That is great. That is great.

As I have said to many folks when we have been debating these issues here on the Senate floor, give me one indicator of policy success more important than are your citizens living longer. I have never heard anyone come back to me and say: Here is something more important, Dan. I don't think there is.

So from 1980 to 2014, there are big swaths of Alaska where the life expectancy went like this. It is great. We

should all celebrate that. Why did that happen? Why did that happen? I will tell you why it happened. We had major resource development here. We have Prudhoe Bay—the development of Prudhoe Bay—the biggest oil and gas field in North America, other oil and gas fields. They had the development of the Aleutian Islands chain with the Magnuson-Stevens Act for resource development on fisheries. That is a huge legislative change. You had mining. You had resource development, which was jobs and revenues. And all of a sudden, these communities were able to get things like clinics and flushed toilets and running water and gymnasiums—things that in the lower 48, in New Jersey, or other places, you just take for granted. We didn't have them there.

And because we had jobs and resource development in an economy, you started having that, and you have people living longer.

So I think you are hopefully seeing the point. This Willow Project is a matter of life and death for my constituents. And that is why almost everybody—the Alaska Federation Native, every Native group, every group in Alaska—they are all for it. And that is why we get really mad and frustrated—I saw Senator MURKOWSKI down here a couple of minutes ago, and she was frustrated—when the big Washington Post and New York Times write their left-leaning, anti-Willows, and they have no idea what they are writing about.

This is a matter of life and death, and they are canceling the voices of the people I represent, particularly the Native people. That has to change. That has to change.

You know who else supports this? I had the great honor of giving my annual speech to the Alaska legislature 2 days ago in Juneau, AK. It is something Senator MURKOWSKI and I do every year. It is a huge honor. I made the pitch on Willow to all the State senators, State representatives. And I am pretty sure we are going to get a unanimous joint resolution from the house and senate, Alaska State Legislature, saying how important this project is and how everybody in elected office in my State supports it. That is very unusual. In any State, you would have outliers. I am pretty sure we are going to get something unanimous.

Why are we doing that? Again, to not just show the media but the Biden administration and the Congress that this issue unifies Alaskans. And we should be respected for this. We should be respected.

So the Native people of Alaska are very strongly supportive. They get canceled. You even have a couple of real clueless Congressmen on the other side of the Congress last week coming out saying Alaskans don't want the Willow Project, the Native people don't. I mean, these guys are clueless. I forget their names—some guy from Arizona—but they are wrong.

I am going to make another point, which is maybe even more frustrating. The media doesn't want to hear from the Native voice. Do you know who else doesn't want to hear? The Biden administration themselves—the Biden administration themselves. I can't tell you how many times I have heard the President, Cabinet officials, the Vice President talk about racial equity, racial justice, environmental justice all the time.

Last night, I was with a remarkable gathering of Alaskan Native people. This was a trilateral gathering from the people on the North Slope where this Willow Project is going to take place—right here. I call it a trilateral gathering because it was the leaders—dozens of them—flew 5,000 miles from here—Utqiagvik, the top of the world, by the way—they flew 5,000 miles to Washington, DC. We all met last night: Senator MURKOWSKI, Congresswoman PELTOLA. And it is the trilateral group because it is the Tribe, what I call Inupiaq Community of the Arctic Slope. This is a regionally, federally recognized Tribe of Inupiat people, their leadership. That was one part of this trilateral group.

The second part was the regional borough—like a county. That is right here, the North Slope Borough. By the way, it is bigger than Montana. That is the size I am talking about. These are elected officials—city council, the mayor. They are all Inupiat indigenous people. That is the second part.

The third part is the Alaska Native Regional Corporation called Arctic Slope Regional Corporation. Remember, it was created by Congress. It is an economic engine. It has Tribal and heritage components.

So it was the leaders of all these three organizations, the Tribe, the borough, and the Regional Alaska Native Corporation—all their leadership. I have known these people for a long time. They are amazing, incredible Americans. You would love them.

A couple dozen of them flew from right here, from Barrow, to Washington, DC. They wanted a meeting with the Secretary of the Interior, Deb Haaland. They wanted a meeting with her. They didn't get the meeting. You would think: Geez, it is pretty important. Do you want to hear the voice of the Native people? Do you want to talk about racial equity, racial justice, environmental justice? These people just flew 5,000 miles to Washington, DC. The Secretary doesn't have time to meet with them. That is not very respectful. They are all supportive, by the way—the Tribe—they are all supportive of the Willow Project.

But here is the thing. It wasn't just this week. This group of Alaska Natives, the trilateral group, some of the most important people in my State, have tried at least five different times to meet with the Secretary of the Interior. They have flown 5,000 miles to Washington, DC, to get one damn meeting with the Secretary of the Inte-

rior. Do you know what? Her office has said no every single time. Environmental justice, racial equity, respect for the Native people—come on. It is a bunch of baloney—five times at least. The only time Deb Haaland has ever given these people an audience was when she was up there for about 20 minutes.

It is shocking. She is canceling the voices of the Native people of Alaska who want this project. They flew 5,000 miles—this trilateral group, the Tribe, the borough, the ANC. Nope, the Secretary is too busy. Nope, the Secretary is too busy last time and last time and last time. At least five different times they tried to meet with her. She won't listen. That is what I call cancellation.

Media, you are welcome to write that. You won't, of course.

I guarantee you that in that time, she has probably met with representatives from some of these far-left radical groups—probably dozens of times—but she won't do it.

You want to hear some real irony? As I mentioned last week, the scientists came out from the Federal Agencies and said: Here is the final environmental impact. It was very long, very detailed, very data-filled scientific studies.

Remember, the normal course of business in the Federal Government is once you do an EIS, you have 30 days for the final Record of Decision. That almost always gets stamped "approved." Rarely, do you have the Record of Decision 30 days later changing the EIS. What is happening in America is all these radical lower 48 environmental groups are trying like crazy to pressure John Podesta and the President of the United States to change it. That would be pure politics.

The Democrats say they are the party of science. This wouldn't be science at all. This would be pure, raw political power to appease the Center for Biological Diversity and completely screw the people I represent on the North Slope. That would happen.

Here is the real irony. Last week, BLM put out this EIS. It was a pretty good statement. They narrowed it more. Then, the Department of the Interior put out a statement. They didn't attribute it to anybody. Deb Haaland certainly didn't say it was her statement. It was just a statement from the Department of the Interior saying the Department has substantial concerns about the Willow Project. Wait a minute. BLM is part of the Department, and BLM just came out with an EIS saying it was good. That is weird. It is the preferred alternative in the final EIS, which BLM just put out, so that is really strange.

And then they said: One of our concerns is direct and indirect greenhouse gas emissions. Indirect—I don't know what that means. Deb Haaland doesn't worry about greenhouse gas emissions from New Mexico, which has increased production in oil and gas in the last 3 years by 700,000 barrels a day. Where is that story, Washington Post?

But they also said they are concerned about the impacts to wildlife and Alaska Native subsistence. They might change it based on that. But who are the people who understand impacts to wildlife in Alaska Native subsistence on the North Slope? Who are they? They are the people I was with last night. They are the people Deb Haaland refuses to meet with.

So the Department of the Interior was really concerned about “impacts to wildlife and Alaska Native subsistence.” She had 30 Alaska Native leaders in DC yesterday to tell her about it. These are the whaling captains; these are the hunters; these are the people who know this issue more than anybody.

Do you know what this is? This is just a ruse, right? If the Department of the Interior was really worried about impacts to wildlife and Alaska Native subsistence, don't you think Deb Haaland would at least have taken one meeting with these great leaders who are the leaders on Alaska Native subsistence and wildlife?

The North Slope Borough Project has the best wildlife experts in the world, and the borough was here yesterday—same with ICAS, the Native Tribe. They were here. It is a little fishy that the Secretary of the Interior won't meet with these great Alaska Natives. Why? Because they are going to say: Madam Secretary, respectfully, we really want this project.

Let me conclude with one other voice that is being ignored, canceled, whatever you want to talk about on the Willow Project. I like this picture. I love this picture, actually. It is a very iconic photo of men and women—actually, it is just all men in that photo. These are the great Americans who built this country. This is taking a lunch break while they are building the Empire State Building. I think they built that in 18 months, 12 months, something incredible like that. The reason I like this picture is because there has become a theme, unfortunately. Some of my Democratic colleagues don't like it when I say this, but there has become a theme that I have seen over the years—certainly in Alaska and maybe not in the rest of the country—but I think it is pretty much the rest of the country, and it is this. My friends in the Democratic Party used to say: We are the party of the working men and women, men and women who built stuff like the Empire State Building and build projects like Willow or the Trans-Alaska Pipeline.

Here is the thing. Whenever the national Democrats—Joe Biden, you name it—whenever they have a choice, a choice between the radical far-left environmental elites who want to stop stuff and these men and women who build things, every time—every single time—they go with the radical elites and sell out the working men and women in America, every time. Some of my Democratic colleagues don't like it when I say that. Well, I am sorry, but I think it is truthful.

I will say—and I said it on the floor the other day—I have a lot of Senate colleagues, Republicans and, in particular, Democrats, and I am so thankful, who have called and reached out to the White House and said: Look, you guys, come on, this Willow project makes so much sense. It has been in permitting for decades. Every environmental review has passed with flying colors. The President is really going to Saudi Arabia to get on bended knee to beg for oil? He is really going to Venezuela to lift sanctions to get oil from them, and we are not letting Alaskans produce it? That is crazy.

A lot of my Democratic colleagues—I am not going to name them because they probably don't want to be named—I appreciate you guys calling the White House to say: Come on, you have to approve this Willow project.

But here is the thing. Last year, I had what is called a Congressional Review Act on a permitting issue. The White House, believe it or not, after the infrastructure bill, which I supported—we had good permitting reform in it. After the infrastructure bill passed, the White House put out a rule that would make infrastructure projects much harder to permit, particularly energy projects.

I brought what is called a Congressional Review Act piece of legislation to rescind the Biden administration rule so we could build things more quickly. I am proud to say, a bipartisan group of Senators supported it. President Biden said he was going to veto the Sullivan bill if it comes to his desk. All right. Mr. President, that is a bad idea.

But the reason I am mentioning that now was that was a test because I had every building trade in America supporting my Congressional Review Act resolution to rescind the Biden administration's arcane rule that would make permitting infrastructure projects harder, and the working men and women said we are supporting the Sullivan Congressional Review Act. And guess what. It passed. Now, the usual suspects, Center for Biological Diversity and all the left green groups, were against it. That was a test.

Whom are you with, the working men and women of America or far-left elite, radical environmental groups that want to shut it down again? That is a test. I posed it to my Senate colleagues. The Senate passed the test. It was bipartisan—not by much, but it was still bipartisan. Thank you, JOE MANCHIN.

Here is the thing. Willow is another test. It is not a test for my colleagues here. If we had a vote on Willow right now, I bet it would pass well over 60, 65 Senators.

So, again, I thank my Democratic colleagues for helping me. All my Republican colleagues want it done. They know it is good for Alaska and really good for America. But here is the thing: Once again, all the big building trades, all of them are coming out in

huge support for the Willow Project. They are making it—the laborers, the building tradesmen—they are making it one of their biggest priorities, if not their biggest priority, for these people. Why? As I mentioned, 2,500 construction jobs—that is the estimate to build this—75 percent of which will be labor and building trade union jobs.

Here are just a few of the statements from some of these great Americans—and they are great Americans. I have gotten to know these labor leaders, the heart and soul of the country.

Here is Terry O'Sullivan, Labors International, LIUNA:

Energy infrastructure, oil and natural gas in particular, is the largest privately funded job-creating sector for LIUNA construction workers. The oil and natural gas industry has provided tens of thousands of jobs, resulting in millions of work hours for our members. These are quality union jobs with families supporting wages and benefits. The same is true for the Willow project.

LIUNA, Terry O'Sullivan, laborer, pro-Willow.

Where is that story, Washington Post, New York Times? You won't write it. You never write it. You canceled these twice.

These are great Americans.

How about Mark McManus, general president of the Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipefitting Union? Let's see what he said about Willow:

It is long past time we create good-paying union jobs and invest in North Slope [Alaska] communities that will benefit directly from this project in the [NPR-A, as we call it].

NPR-A set aside 7 years ago for oil and gas development. The Willow Project will help deliver reliable energy to consumers and provide billions of dollars in economic investments in these communities.

There you go. Pipefitters.

Come on, national media, write that story. Just don't keep quoting the far-left environmental groups; quote working men and women who built this Nation.

Who else? James Callahan, president of the operating engineers. Willow will also put operating engineers to work. Those are his union members. He is in charge of them. He is another great American, along with others in the skilled trades. These jobs offer families sustaining wages and offer strong health and pension benefits. Furthermore, construction of the Willow Project will provide much needed revenue to Alaska and the North Slope communities, the Native communities.

Another union leader in America. Now, look, the President likes to call himself blue-collar Joe and working Joe and all of that.

Prove it, Mr. President. Prove it.

This is another example of a choice. The only groups in this country right now who want to shut down the Willow Project are far-left, radical environmental groups who don't want to build anything, who don't give a darn about working men and women in America

and certainly don't give a darn about the Native community on the North Slope.

I really wish our media friends would write this story. The unions support it; quote them. The Native people support it; quote them, don't cancel them.

This administration needs to wake up. The American people are getting tired of this. This is a test. The EIS came out last week. If it is changed, it will be because of raw political power by far-left environmental groups who forced the White House to kill this project.

I am just going to end with this. This is just an example. These are union members. These are broad-based groups of Alaska Native organizations. These are just economic groups in our State and nationally. This is not a hard call.

This project has the highest environmental standards in the world, and if we need oil and gas, which we do, why wouldn't we get it from American workers, like the people I just quoted, to help Alaska Native communities, like the people I just quoted? Why is the Federal Government—Joe Biden—going to Saudi Arabia to beg for oil? By the way, he got rejected. Why did we lift sanctions on Venezuela, a terrorist regime? To get more oil—whose production processes are 18 times more polluting than an American oil and gas project. Why? None of this makes sense.

So, again, I want to thank my Democratic Senate colleagues in particular. We have 30 days. If you are an American and you care about energy security and good jobs, if you are a union member, pick up the phone, send an email—blm.gov—and tell them: Stop the madness. Finalize the Willow Project for the benefit of the Native people in Alaska, for the benefit of working Americans, for the benefit of our national security, and for the benefit of our environment. That is what we need to do. I am hoping that the Biden administration makes the right call.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. OSSOFF). The Senator from Michigan.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that all postcloture time on the Chung nomination be considered expired; that at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, February 13, the Senate vote on confirmation of the Chung nomination; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; and finally, that the cloture motion with respect to the Mendez-Miro nomination ripen following the disposition of the Chung nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PROTECTING CHILDREN WITH FOOD ALLERGIES ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, every parent in America remembers the first day they sent their child off to school. For many parents, this is a day filled with tears of joy as they send their child off into the world alone for the first time. For others, it is a day of worry and fear. Parents wonder if their child will be able to find their classrooms or if they will make friends. Some even worry if their child's school could be the scene of the senseless violence that occurs all too often in this country. But for the parents of a child with severe allergies, there is another serious fear: the threat of anaphylaxis. Anaphylaxis causes blood pressure to plummet, airways to constrict and close, and the heart to beat erratically and stop. It can turn deadly, quickly. Even a trace amount of an allergen can be enough to trigger anaphylaxis.

Only one drug can halt and reverse the progression of anaphylaxis: epinephrine. But as miraculous as the drug is, it can't help if it is not on hand when the unthinkable happens. That is why, in 2013, I introduced the School Access to Emergency Epinephrine Act to make schools safer for children with food allergies. At the time, schools often did not stock epinephrine, or "EpiPens," as it is often called. This left children with food allergies vulnerable at school, especially those who may not have known they are allergic. Sometimes, children forget their EpiPens at home; others don't have EpiPens to begin with.

My 2013 bill encouraged more schools to keep epinephrine on hand by providing them with federal grants. It received bipartisan support, and it was signed into law by President Obama. Over the last 10 years, it has saved lives, and it has given parents and students alike greater peace of mind that their school will be prepared to respond to a life-threatening emergency. But, I have thought since then: What more can we do to prevent allergic reactions from occurring in the first place?

I hear from parents across my State of Illinois who are concerned about sending their children with food allergies to school. Tamara Hubbard from Lake Zurich, IL, is one of those parents. She is the mother of a teenage son who has food allergies. Ms. Hubbard also happens to be a therapist whose practice includes working with children who have food allergies and

their families. She wrote to me and told me that: "It takes a daily dose of blind faith mixed with hope" to send a child with food allergies to school. For a child with a peanut or sesame allergy, she said, going to school can be a lot like entering the lion's den. These and other common food allergens are often contained in school meals and in the snacks and lunches of other children. You have to be careful.

Ms. Hubbard said that the families she counsels are often left wondering, "Does our school staff understand allergen labeling? Are they aware of cross-contamination best practices and how to make safe ingredient substitutions for lunches?" And what if they are not aware? That last one is a hard question to contemplate because we know the worst can—and does—happen.

Last May, Tom Shaw, a father in Papillon, NE, just outside of Omaha, dropped his 14-year-old son, Jagger, off at school, gave him a hug and told him to have a good day—just as he had done every school day. But this was not a normal day. You see, like 1 in 50 American children, Jagger was allergic to peanuts. But at snack time, he was given a granola bar that had peanuts in it. Almost immediately, Jagger's heart started racing, and his throat began to swell. He went to the school nurse's office, where he was injected with an EpiPen. But his condition continued to worsen quickly. By the time Jagger was rushed to the hospital, his heart had stopped beating. He had to be resuscitated and put on a ventilator. He suffered serious damage to his heart and brain. Two days after eating that granola bar, Jagger died. Last month, a 10-year-old girl in Amarillo, TX, Emerson Kate Cole, also died after she went into anaphylaxis at school.

Nearly 1 million children nationwide have had an allergic reaction at school. And 25 percent of these reactions occur among children who have undiagnosed food allergies. We can and must do more to prevent children with allergies, diagnosed and undiagnosed, from experiencing potentially deadly reactions to food allergens in schools. That is why, 2 weeks ago, Senator DUCKWORTH and I introduced the Protecting Children with Food Allergies Act. Our bill would require cafeteria workers and other school nutrition workers to receive training in how to identify, prevent, and respond to food-related allergic reactions. That is it. It is a simple fix that would make our schools safer for children with food allergies so that they can focus on learning, not on whether or not they might have an allergic reaction at lunchtime. These cooks, servers, and other cafeteria workers already undergo other sorts of trainings, such as to prevent the spread of foodborne pathogens. We think they also should know the basics on food allergy safety, too. The Protecting Children with Food Allergies Act would move us in that direction.

We hope our colleagues will join us and support this bill with a strong bipartisan vote, just as we did in 2013.